



## City of Hamilton Report for Consideration

**To:** Chair and Members  
Public Works Committee

**Date:** March 17, 2025

**Report No:** PW25008

**Subject/Title:** Rymal Road Municipal Class Environmental  
Assessment (Upper James Street to Dartnall Road)

**Ward(s) Affected:** 6, 7 and 8

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### Recommendations

- 1) That the General Manager, Public Works, **BE AUTHORIZED AND DIRECTED** to file the Rymal Road (Upper James Street to Dartnall Road) Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Environmental Study Report with the Municipal Clerk for a minimum thirty (30) day public review period; and
- 2) That upon completion of the 30-Day Review Period and resolution of any Section 16 Order requests, the General Manager, Public Works, **BE AUTHORIZED AND DIRECTED** to proceed with the implementation of the Preferred Design (attached as Appendix "B" to Report PW25008), to be funded from the existing capital funds as per Appendix "E" attached to Report PW25008, and through future budget requests.

### Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to present the final assessment findings and to request approval to proceed with the final stages of the Rymal Road Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process for the project.
- Completion of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment was initiated in response to ongoing transportation issues in the project area.
- The final recommendations include a road urbanization, the addition of travel-lanes to create a five-lane cross-section, and the addition of active transportation facilities for the entire extent of the study area.

- Issuing a Notice of Completion, the completion of the thirty (30) day review period and resolution of any Section 16 Order requests is required before the project can proceed to detailed design and construction.

## Financial Considerations

The capital cost of proceeding with the design and construction of the Environmental Assessment recommendations is estimated to be approximately \$88,000,000. This is based on a Class D cost estimate developed through the Environmental Assessment and it includes: detailed design, utilities, streetlighting, traffic control, roadworks, stormwater works, and property needs. As a Class D estimate, the amount is subject to change and will be refined as each project segment proceeds through detailed design and the applicable budget year. The Class D estimate will be reflected and refined through the Tax Supported Capital Budget (Transportation Network Budget) and the Rates Supported Capital Budget.

In terms of the approach to funding and construction, construction of the works on Rymal Road are proposed to be implemented in a four-phase approach listed below. While the exact construction times are dependent on the completion of the Environmental Assessment and on the completion of each preceding segment, it is anticipated that construction may start in 2028 and reach completion in 2034.

Upon completion of the Environmental Assessment, the budget items associated with Rymal Road project will be updated to reflect the four segments and their phasing. Updates will include confirming phasing, amending the future forecast and exploring cashflow options. Below are the segments, their approximate length, tentative construction timing, and the approximate portion of the overall implementation cost. The timing outlined is conservative at this stage; during the detailed design phase, review of timelines, including opportunities to compress the schedule and reduce impacts on road users, will be explored.

- Phase 1: Dartnall Road to Upper Ottawa Street (approximately 1km, two-year construction, \$16,500,000)
- Phase 2: Upper Ottawa Street to Upper Sherman Avenue (approximately 1.6km, two-year construction, \$26,700,000)
- Phase 3: Upper Sherman Avenue to Upper Wentworth Street (approximately 800m, one-year construction, \$13,300,000)
- Phase 4: Upper Wentworth Street to Upper James Street (approximately 1.8km, two-year construction, \$31,500,000)

Appendix “E” to Report PW25008 outlines all approved and proposed Project IDs relating to construction works for this project. As shown in Appendix “E”, there is currently design budget available to start the detailed design of Phases 1 and 2 of the project.

It should be noted that the items tied to the Rates Supported Capital Budget in Appendix “E” are for watermain work that is not included in the scope of the Environmental Assessment or the Class D cost estimate from the Environmental

Assessment. However, additional budget requests tied to the stormwater components of the project will be made in upcoming budget cycles, anticipated to start in 2026.

The current total in Appendix “E” is \$36.9 M; this includes funding for both works included in the Class D estimate (\$28.6 M from the Tax Supported Capital Budget) and watermain work (\$8.3 M from the Rates Supported Capital Budget), which is excluded from the Class D estimate and scope of the Environmental Assessment. The remaining required funds of \$59.4 M, to support the Class D estimate, is anticipated to be funded from Development Charge, block funding, and the Rates Supported Capital Budget, which will be reflected in future forecasts and financing plans.

After construction, the annual operating and maintenance cost for the entire extent of the study area is predicted to be approximately \$815,000 based on calculations completed by the consultant through the Environmental Assessment. However, this cost will be verified by staff during the detailed design stage.

## **Background**

Rymal Road is a major east-west arterial road that traverses the south side of Hamilton and forms part of the city’s designated truck route. Rymal Road has also been identified as a portion of the future S-Line route of the BLAST Network, the City’s planned rapid transit network. To date, some sections of Rymal Road have received capital improvements including widening to a five-lane cross-section (two through lanes in each direction and a centre turning lane) and the inclusion of active transportation infrastructure. However, the approximately 5 km long section of Rymal Road between Upper James Street to Dartnall Road (see Appendix “A” to Report PW25008: Study Area Map) does not have a cross-section that aligns with the neighbouring segments to both the east and west. Within this area, the cross-section is generally three-lane (one through lane in each direction and centre turning lane) and active transportation facilities are inconsistent.

In coordination with planned capital improvements to this section of Rymal Road, a Schedule C Municipal Class Environmental Assessment was initiated. The goal of the assessment is to ensure that Rymal Road is transformed into a well-connected multi-modal transportation corridor, that addresses the long-term needs of all road users.

## **Analysis**

In following the Schedule C process, the Rymal Road Environmental Assessment aims to fulfil Phases 1 (Problem and Opportunity Statement), 2 (Alternative Solutions), 3 (Alternative Designs), and 4 (Environmental Study Report) of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process. Key findings and considerations from the project are detailed below.

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## Phase 1: Problem and/or Opportunity Statement

Through internal engagement and a preliminary review of the context area and available data, it was confirmed that a solution needed to be developed for Rymal Road to address ongoing transportation challenges and the lack of multi-modal transportation facilities. An opportunity was presented to redesign Rymal Road to accommodate all modes of transportation, to urbanize the roadway, and to align with updated City policies and practices, such as the Complete-Liveable-Better Streets Policy and Framework.

## Phase 2: Evaluation of Alternative Solutions (Phase 2)

Five (5) alternative solutions were identified and evaluated as part of Phase 2 of this study. Further details on the options and the evaluation criteria are included in Appendix “C” to Report PW25008 and will be detailed in Section 4.0 of the Environmental Study Report. The primary evaluation criteria are summarized as follows:

- Transportation: operational deficiencies (vehicle capacity, access, etc.); public transit needs; active transportation modes; safety for all users (crossing locations for pedestrians, Vision Zero principles)
- Natural Environment: disturbance to street trees and other natural features; positive impact on climate change (reduced personal vehicle use)
- Socio-Economic: disruption effects to residences/businesses during and post construction; street corridor character (i.e. Complete Streets considerations); impact on park land/open space
- Engineering: compatibility of the design concept with connecting roadway sections; impacts to existing utility infrastructure; address existing drainage issues; implementation of Low Impact Development measures within the right-of-way.
- Cost: relative capital cost; on-going maintenance and operational costs

The selection of the recommended alternative solution involved identifying the advantages and disadvantages of the various alternatives. The alternative that had the best overall balance of advantages and disadvantages was recommended as the preferred alternative solution. The preferred alternative solution was determined to be Option 3: Create New Travel Lanes.

## Phase 3: Evaluation of Alternative Designs (Phase 3)

Three (3) alternative designs were identified and evaluated as part of Phase 3 of this study. Further details on the options and the evaluation criteria are included in Appendix “D” to Report PW25008 and will be detailed in Section 5.0 of the Environmental Study Report. The primary evaluation criteria built upon criteria used in Phase 2. Upon evaluation, the preferred design was determined to be Option 2: a five-lane cross-section with a multi-use path on the north side and a sidewalk on the south side. A cross-section depicting the preferred design is provided in Appendix “B” to Report PW25008.

The recommended road lane configuration is uniform throughout the project area (i.e. from Upper James Street to Dartnall Road) and is also consistent with the existing sections of Rymal Road lying both the east and west of the project area. Both the sidewalk and multi-use trail are to be setback from the vehicle travel lanes to improve efficiency of road maintenance operations and enhance safety.

Finally, through reviewing the future demands for the S-Line of the City's BLAST Network, the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment also confirmed that while transit infrastructure improvements will be made through the upcoming works (e.g. larger platforms, shelters, etc.), dedicated transit lanes are not required at this time. However, the proposed road will be built in a manner allowing future flexibility to accommodate additional transit measures, such as dedicated transit lanes, should the need arise in the future.

### Legislated Requirements

The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment study follows the planning and design process of the Municipal Engineers Association Municipal Class Environmental Assessment, October 2000, as amended in 2007, 2011, 2015, 2023, and 2024. The City has completed this study in accordance with the planning process applicable to Schedule C projects under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment. These projects are approved under the Environmental Assessment Act, as long as they are planned, designed and constructed according to the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment document. If the City does not follow the process outlined in the Municipal Engineers Association's Municipal Class Environmental Assessment document, it could be found to be in contravention of the Environmental Assessment Act.

Through following the legislated process, the study has fulfilled the Class Environmental Assessment requirements for Phases 1 through 4 to determine the Preferred Design solution and to document the results in the final report.

Following Council approval, the Environmental Study Report will become available to the public for a minimum thirty (30) day review period, during which the public can submit any final comments they may have with respect to this study. This will also be an opportunity for any interested party to request a Section 16 Order. Upon completion of the 30-Day Review Period and resolution of any Section 16 Order requests, the study will therefore fulfil all legal requirements of the planning process pertaining to Schedule C projects.

### Policy Implications

The recommended Preferred Design developed in the course of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment is consistent with the Urban Hamilton Official Plan, Stormwater Management Master Plan, City-Wide Transportation Master Plan, Complete-Liveable-Better Streets Policy and Framework, Vision Zero, and all other corporate plans and policies. This recommendation will not bind the Corporation or alter or contravene any established City Policy.

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## Relevant Engagement During the Project

Members of Council: The study area spans Wards 6, 7 and 8. Project details have been provided, throughout the project, to the Ward Councillors via various communications and representation at the two (2) Public Information Centres.

Indigenous Nations: The following Indigenous Nations were engaged during the Environmental Assessment process: the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (represented by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy of Chiefs Council and the Six Nations of the Grand River Elected Council), Mississaugas (represented by the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation), and the Huron-Wendat (represented by the Huron-Wendat at Wendake), and the Métis.

Public and Stakeholders: The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process requires public and stakeholder consultation, according to the requirements for a Schedule C project. Consultation plans were developed and followed. Public consultation actions are summarized as follows:

- A Notice of Study Commencement and Public Information Centre #1 was issued on March 18, 2022, and March 25, 2022, in the Hamilton Spectator. A mailout was also sent to pertinent agencies, City staff and all landowners within the study area. Public Information Centre # 1 was held on March 29, 2022, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The PIC was conducted on a virtual (Webex Event) platform. This platform provided attendees an opportunity to review display information, present comments and discuss them with City of Hamilton and their consultants.
- A Notice of Public Information Centre # 2 was issued on September 8, 2023, and September 15, 2023, in the Hamilton Spectator. A mailout was also sent to pertinent agencies, City staff and all landowners within the study area. Public Information Centre #2 was held on September 19, 2023, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The Public Information Centre was conducted on a virtual (Webex Event) platform. This platform provided attendees an opportunity to review display information, present comments and discuss them with City of Hamilton and their consultants.
- The pertinent project information was also made available throughout the study on both the project website (<https://www.hamilton.ca/environmental-assessments/rymal-road-upper-james-street-dartnall-road>) and an EngageHamilton page (<https://engage.hamilton.ca/rymalea>)

Internal: The following groups were consulted in the preparation of this Environmental Study Report and the associated technical studies: Engineering Services; Hamilton Water; Transit; Transportation; Transportation Planning and Parking; Environmental Services; Planning; Growth Management; Hamilton Fire; Hamilton Police; and Hamilton Paramedic Services.

## Alternatives

None

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## Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This report is related to the following Council Strategic Priorities:

### 1. Sustainable Economic & Ecological Development

- Outcome 2: Facilitate the growth of key sectors  
This project will enhance access for customers and supply vehicles to the numerous commercial business operations within the project area.
- Outcome 3: Accelerate our response to climate change  
The study included preliminary work tied to the design and implementation of stormwater infrastructure, including storm sewers and Low Impact Development. Stormwater infrastructure is essential in creating climate resilience and readiness in communities.

### 2. Safe & Thriving Neighbourhoods

- Outcome 2: Make sure people can safely and efficiently move around by foot, bike, transit or car  
This project will improve the safety and efficiency of a major multi-modal transportation corridor in the city by establishing additional vehicle travel lanes; and dedicated platforms (i.e. sidewalk and multi-use pathway) for other users.

### 3. Responsiveness & Transparency

- Outcome 2: Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving  
This study included the application of public engagement practices through two public information centres and communications with the public that occurred throughout the duration of the project.

## Previous Reports Submitted

N/A

## Consultation

Representatives from the following Divisions were consulted and provided input during the preparation of this report, including:

- Jackie Kennedy, Director, Public Works
- Kirk Weaver, Director, Corporate Services
- Dipankar Sharma, Manager, Public Works
- Megan Salvucci, Senior Project Manager, Public Works
- John Kukalis, Project Manager, Public Works

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## **Appendices and Schedules Attached**

Appendix A: Study Area Map

Appendix B: Preferred Design Cross-Section

Appendix C: Evaluation of Alternative Solutions

Appendix D: Evaluation of Alternative Designs

Appendix E: Summary of Project IDs as of the Proposed 2025 Budget

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